BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REPORT OF THE ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

To the Board of Directors and Members of the Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society:

The Archives Committee is pleased to submit the following report for the year ended December 31, 2017.

The Committee acquires, preserves, and organizes photographs, documents, drawings, and other paper materials related to the history of the Boston and Maine Railroad, its predecessors and successors, and other New England railroads. We furnish archival information to many different audiences including researchers, writers, preservationists, surveyors, engineers, and genealogists.

Our collection is housed in a secure, climate-controlled environment at the Center for Lowell History, 40 French Street, Lowell, Massachusetts. The collection is owned by the Society and managed by the Archives Committee. We occupy an area of about 1,000 square feet where we have shelving, cabinet storage, and work space for researchers. Our cooperative agreement with the University of Massachusetts Lowell gives our collection an accessibility that is unmatched by most other railroad historical societies.

At Lowell the visitor will find photographs, slides, negatives, right of way and track maps, valuation surveys, timetables, books, periodicals, mechanical drawings of structures and equipment, and a wealth of data organized alphabetically by subject—Abandonments, Accidents, Baggage, etc. Researchers may browse the collection on their own or meet with the archives chairman for assistance. The current hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The staff at the Center for Lowell History give valuable assistance to researchers and the committee. We are very appreciative of what they do for us.

We also maintain an annex in North Chelmsford that is used for the cataloging and storage of a variety of B&M records and drawings, including primary source material from the Executive, Accounting, Engineering, Law, Operating, Traffic, and Mechanical Departments.

Active committee members are Ken Akerboom, David Ashenden, Len Bachelder, Steve Butterworth, Carl Byron, Rick Conard, Eric DiVirgilio, Jack Dziadul, Bob Farrenkopf, Mark Fecteau, Rick Hurst, Alan LePain, Jack Madden, Rick Nowell, Keith Scarlett, Mal Sockol, Leo Sullivan, Henry Taves, Al Taylor, Jim Teed, Gareth Thomas, and Earl Tuson.

We held 8 work sessions in 2017, as compared to 10 in 2016 and 11 in 2015. Average attendance was 8 in 2017, as compared to 8 in 2016 and 6 in 2015. At our work sessions we research requests for information, organize our collection, and process and file new acquisitions. Our meetings always include a lively exchange of railroad information.

In addition to work accomplished at our monthly meetings, committee members made important contributions at other times. David Ashenden continued indexing Maine Central Railroad employee magazines. David, along with Carl Byron, Len Bachelder, Rick Conard, Alan LePain, and Paul Kosciolek answered a variety of historical inquiries. Rick Hurst donated his time to organizing records at North Chelmsford and finding good homes for duplicate and off-topic materials. Jim Nigzus continued his valuable help to improve our accommodations at Chelmsford. Jack Dziadul embarked on the preparation new index to the *B&M Bulletin* and kept his index of Modelers Notes current. Mark Fecteau transcribed registers of B&M Authority for Expenditure records. Mal Sockol took charge of the Archives calendar on the web site.

A group of volunteers organized by Will Scopa worked on preparation of bridge blueprints for scanning.

We logged in a total of 52 donations in 2017 as compared with 73 donations in 2016, and 58 donations in 2015. Donors in 2017 included Barry D. Boyce, David Reilly, Dan Beach, Leonard M. Singer, Volker Antoni, Vermont Railroad Historical Society, Gregory Majewski, Frank W. Burbank, Pamela N. Myrus, Andover (N.H.) Historical Society, Thomas Gillen, Russell F. Munroe, Kevin McKeon, Bob Warren, Nicholas K. Fowler, Donald Morrison, Jim Teed, Kratz Leatherman, Alan Dustin, Arthur V. Bliss, Frederic Nystrom, Plaistow (N.H.) Historical Society, Scott Whitney, Center for Lowell History, Henry W. Marrec, John Stasiowski, Henry Gibson, Donald B. Valentine, Kim Bucheit, Alan MacMillan, Jr., Carl H. Senftleben, David D. Ashenden, William Lieberman, Steve Paris, Richard A. Chase, Mike Pappas, Justin Wiley, William L. Morrison, II, U.S. Department of Justice, David Hutchinson, Susan Hatch, Leo Sullivan, Dale McCleskey, Ann H. Hebert, Historical Society of Dunkirk, N.Y., and Paul Boothroyd.

We fulfilled the Society’s educational mission in several ways:

* Answered reference questions submitted by inquirers. We generally do not charge for answering requests for information, but we do charge for photo reproduction and copying large documents, and we remind inquirers that we take donations.
* We continued to expand our online photo archive, flickr.com/photos/bmrrhs, which is designed to bring our photo collection into the homes of internet users. We added over 200 images to the site in 2017.
* We added a variety of B&M and MEC documents to our On-Line Archives located at bmrrhs.org.
* Carl Byron brought the history of the B&M to local audiences with speaking engagements at Laconia and Raymond, New Hampshire and Groton, Mass.

Our catalog now has 12,843 entries, compared to 12,547 entries in 2016, and 12,377 in 2015.

We added approximately 200 entries to our employee data base. There are now 17,616 entries.

We gave considerable attention to our scanning project. David Ashenden scanned MEC time tables and employee magazines, *B&MRRHS Newsletters,* and *B&M Bulletins.* The work is on-going, but much interesting material has already been added to the on-line archives. We are planning to make DVDs of *Bulletins* available as a fund-raiser.

Using part of a $10,000 appropriation from the Preston S. Johnson bequest, we began digital photography of steam locomotive drawings and valuation plans. The work was accomplished by UMass Lowell student interns. We concluded that we needed the finer resolution only available with a scanner and investigated the availability of continuous feel scanners to handle blueprints and other large documents.

Our Committee welcomes new members. We need researchers, catalogers, and organizers. No experience required—just an interest in railroad history. Get started by attending one of our work session. Your chairman is, as always, impressed and inspired by how much can be done by volunteers.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Nowell

Frederick N. Nowell, III

Chairman, Archives Committee